

Docket Item # 3 and 4  
BAR CASE # 2011-0288 and  
2011-0289

BAR Meeting  
November 2, 2011

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Alterations

**APPLICANT:** Joseph and Ann Shumard

**LOCATION:** 807 Oronoco Street

**ZONE:** RB / Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

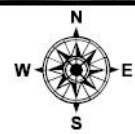
1. That the applicant work with Staff to determine if historic wood siding exists and can be salvaged and if replacement siding is necessary, in whole or in part, that it be historically appropriate wood siding.
2. That any replacement windows be in conformance with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications.
3. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
  - a. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
  - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including siding or roofing over 100 square feet, windows and signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



**BAR CASE #2011-0288 & 0289**



## **I. ISSUE**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate to demolish the existing one story, wood frame rear ell, including the brick chimney flue and attached shed. The rear yard is partially visible from Oronoco Street and the public alley to the northwest. The rear ell measures approximately 10 feet 6 inches by 12 feet 2 inches and the shed measures 8 feet 1 inch by 6 feet 9 inches. In July 2011, Code Administration identified this property as being in violation of the City's property maintenance code with respect to the deteriorated chimney and siding. The property owner was informed of these violations and directed to contact BAR Staff to bring this property into compliance. BAR Staff and Code Administration inspectors have been meeting with the property owner to devise a work plan to bring the property into compliance while complying with the BAR's Design Guidelines. In addition to the application before the Board, the applicant is working with BAR Staff on administrative approval for repair and possible replacement of siding and other routine maintenance.

The applicant has noted that, in the near future, he anticipates coming to the Board to request approval of a one-story rear addition, with a footprint similar to the ell now proposed for demolition. The applicant also owns the adjacent property immediately to the west at 809 Oronoco Street and intends to consolidate the two lots and internally join the two townhouses.

Therefore, in consideration of the phased approach to this project, the applicant proposes to properly frame and close in the rear of the main block once the one-story addition is demolished. While this elevation is minimally visible from a public right-of-way, the applicant will use historically appropriate wood siding and will convert the existing first story window into a door. The applicant proposes to replace the two existing windows on this elevation. The applicant does not propose to change the front elevation.

## **II. HISTORY**

807 Oronoco Street is an end unit in a row of three simple two-bay frame townhouses. An 1863 bird's eye view of Alexandria shows a row of gable roofed houses along this general area of Oronoco Street. It is unclear whether 807 Oronoco Street is among those shown. The building, along with most of the north side of the 800 block of Oronoco Street, does appear to be present on the 1877 G. M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria*. 807 Oronoco does have a rear ell in 1877. This block is not shown on the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps until 1902. The 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the house with a one-story rear ell with a shingle roof and identifies the building as a barber shop. By 1921, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map denotes the rear ell as having a composition roof. The 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a small appendage to the rear ell, possibly the existing shed.

The alley to northwest of this property is public but the abutting parcels on the west, north and east are private.

## **III. ANALYSIS**

### **Permit to Demolish**

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?

- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted. Staff finds that the proposed demolition and encapsulation do not compromise the integrity of this townhouse as the area proposed for demolition, an existing, significantly-altered, one-story rear ell, is so far compromised that restoration of this utilitarian portion of the house is infeasible. While the footprint of the rear ell addition is likely original, the materials—door, window, bricktex siding and composition roof—clearly illustrate such substantial changes that little, if any, historic material is left. Further, Staff notes that the one-story rear ell and dilapidated shed attached at the rear appear to be nearly beyond repair and retention.

While it is unclear what the condition of the house was in 2000 when the current owner purchased the property, and Staff notes that the decision to support demolition in this case should not be perceived as a precedent in future cases for demolition by neglect, Staff notes that the Board regularly supports the demolition of small rear additions to make way for new additions. Further, the main block which is the historic form of this building, will be retained and restored and the next phase of the project, the request for a new one-story rear addition, will be a return to what is believed to be the historic, original building form.

While the *Design Guidelines* generally recommend that chimneys be retained *in situ*, Staff does not object to the demolition of this flue in this location, noting that it is minimally visible from a public way and typical of the type of flue that the Board has approved for demolition in similar instances.

#### Alterations

The rear (north) elevation is minimally visible from the public alley northeast of the property. Staff, therefore, supports “temporary” enclosure of a portion of the rear elevation of the main block with wood siding for the interim period before the applicant comes to the Board for an addition application. Staff also supports the changing the existing first story rear window to a door, noting that this represents a common type of utilitarian alteration found throughout the districts.

Repair and/or replacement of any of the other siding, as well as replacement of the existing rear windows, can be handled administratively working with BAR Staff, but must be in conformance with the Board’s recently approved policies.



**STAFF**

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

**IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Administration:

- F-1 The review by Code Administration is a preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Thomas Sciulli, Plan Review Supervisor at [thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov](mailto:thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4190. (Code)
- C-1 Demolition, building and trades permits are required for this project. Five sets of architectural quality drawings shall accompany the permit applications that fully detail the construction/alteration as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-2 Any proposed future alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Where a structure has been demolished or removed, the vacant lot shall be filled and maintained to the existing grade (USBC 3303.4).
- C-4 Provisions shall be made to prevent the accumulation of water or damage to any foundation on the premises or adjoining property (USBC 3303.5).

Transportation & Environmental Services

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R2. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)

- R5. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- R6. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

#### **CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS**

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-4 Any work within or performed from the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

#### Alexandria Archaeology

- F-1 Historical maps indicate that a house was present on this lot by 1877, owned at that time by Thomas Downey (who owned all the townhouses from 807 Oronoco to the corner at North Alfred, and probably rented out units to tenants). The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into residential life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria.
- R-1 The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
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## V. IMAGES



**Figure 1. Front (south) elevation.**



**Figure 2. Side (east) elevation.**





**Figure 3. Rear (north) elevation of main block and rear ell addition.**



**Figure 4. Rear shed attached to rear ell and chimney, all proposed for demolition.**



**Figure 5. Plat showing areas proposed for demolition.**

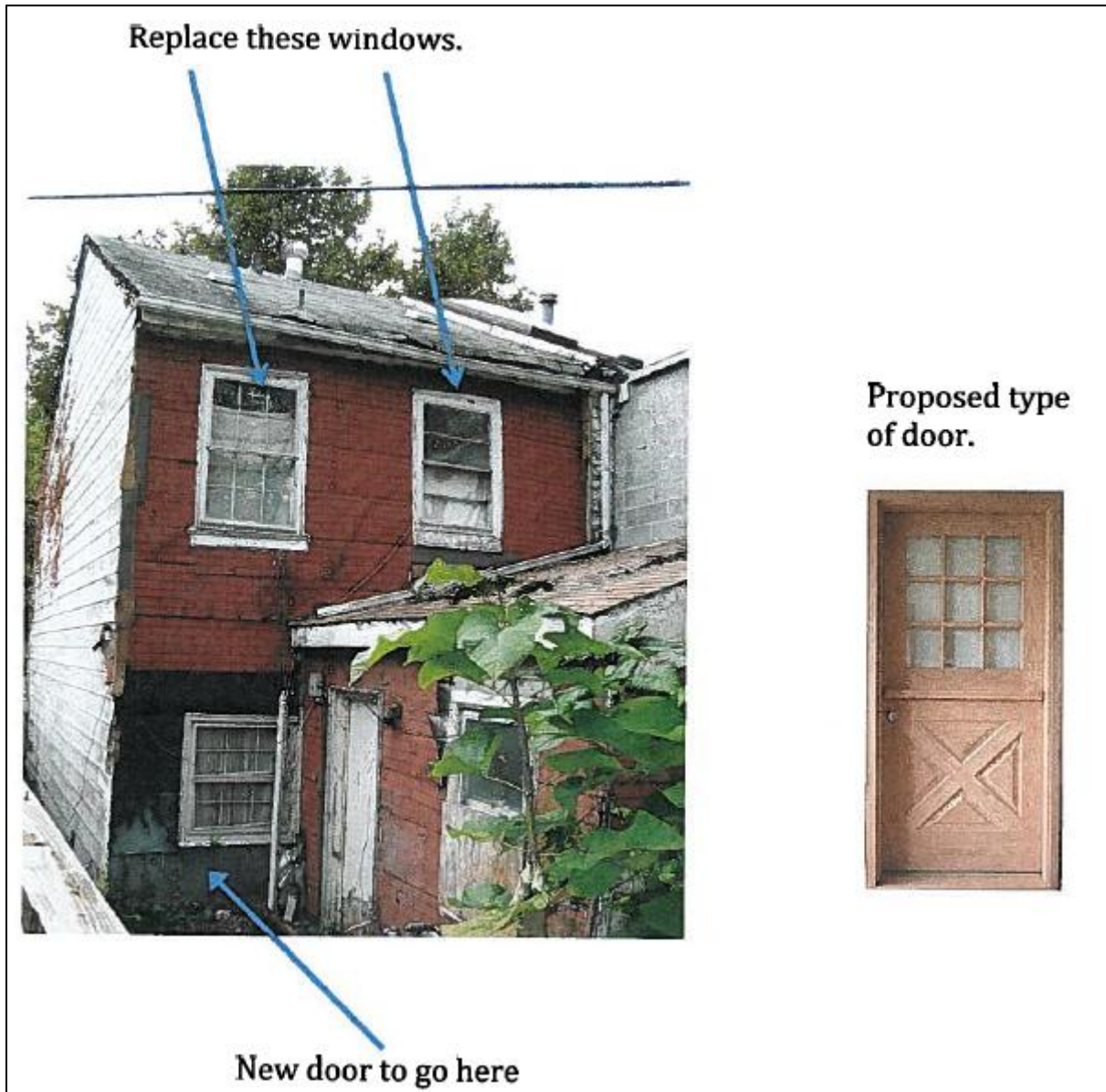


Figure 6. Proposed alterations to rear (north) elevation.